

2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT

REFLECTING. GROWING. INSPIRING.



CHARLESTON COUNTY PARK
& RECREATION COMMISSION

CHARLESTONCOUNTYPARKS.COM



Message from the Executive Director

Dear Charleston County Residents:

As we write our 2017 - 2018 annual report to our community we are in the midst of our 50th year anniversary. Remarkably, I have had the honor of being a part of Charleston County Parks for 30 of those 50 years. In that time the parks have grown to encompass over 11,000 acres and offer hundreds of programs and special events.

As we look back on these 50 years we have much to be proud of including the opening of six day parks, including a historic site and nature center, two fishing piers, a marina, three beach parks and a groundbreaking skate park. Over these years we have hosted tens of millions of visits, we had 2,540,916 million visitors in our fiscal year 2017 - 2018 alone.

But, for me, what stands out the most are the special moments our community has shared in the parks. We have hosted numerous engagements and weddings. We have brought families together for reunions, birthday parties and impromptu picnics. We have taught children to swim, paddle canoes and look for lizards and birds.

It is all of these amazing moments, both big and small, that make up the extraordinary character of Charleston County Parks. As we reflect on where we have been, I'm so excited to imagine what's ahead.

I hope as you read this report you enjoy learning a little bit more about what your Charleston County Parks have accomplished this past year. From premiering new events like Shuckin' on the Cooper and the Off-Road Duathlon to opening The Rainforest waterpark attraction at Splash Zone to beginning two important initiatives through our Foundation: Swim For It and Skate Forward - it certainly has been a notable year.

To accomplish all of these initiatives we need the support of our community. As Charleston County Parks enters into our second 50 years - we want to say thank you to you our neighbors. We value your trust in us to preserve our parks and to offer you great programming.

Warmly,



David Bennett
Executive Director
Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission



David Bennett

Agency Overview

The large park system features over 11,000 acres of property and includes six land parks, three beach parks, four seasonally-lifeguarded beach areas, three dog parks, two landmark fishing piers, three waterparks, 19 boat landings, a climbing wall, a challenge course, an interpretive center, an equestrian center, cottages, a campground, a marina, a historic site, skate park, as well as wedding, meeting, and event facilities. The park system also offers a wide variety of recreational services - festivals, camps, classes, programs, and much more.

Mission Statement

The Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission (CCPRC) will improve the quality of life in Charleston County by offering a diverse system of park facilities, programs, and services.

Vision Statement

To be distinguished as a nationally accredited and financially sustainable park and recreation agency through our commitment to preserving our natural, historical and cultural resources, offering a clean, safe, and exceptional visitor experience that is accessible to all.

Our Vision Statement was crafted in 2017 to guide us into the next 50 years of park and recreation excellence.

Core Values

Community Enrichment

Enriching lives through education and programs

Leadership

Providing professional staff development

Fun

Delivering fun to customers

Exceptional Customer Service

Always focusing on you

Health and Wellness

Providing and promoting healthy lifestyle opportunities

Quality

Striving for quality throughout the park system

Diversity

Fostering diverse populations of vendors, employees, and customers

Safety

Ensuring safe and secure environments

Accessibility

Providing accessibility through affordable options and a variety of offerings

Stewardship

Preserving and conserving cultural, natural, and historical resources

Building a Legacy

Maintaining a vision for the future while sustaining a healthy park system



CHARLESTON COUNTY PARK & RECREATION COMMISSIONERS



Andrew Thomas
Chair



Teddy Manos
Vice-Chair



Collin Bruner
Secretary-Treasurer



Lisa S. King



Mattese Lecque



Eduardo Curry



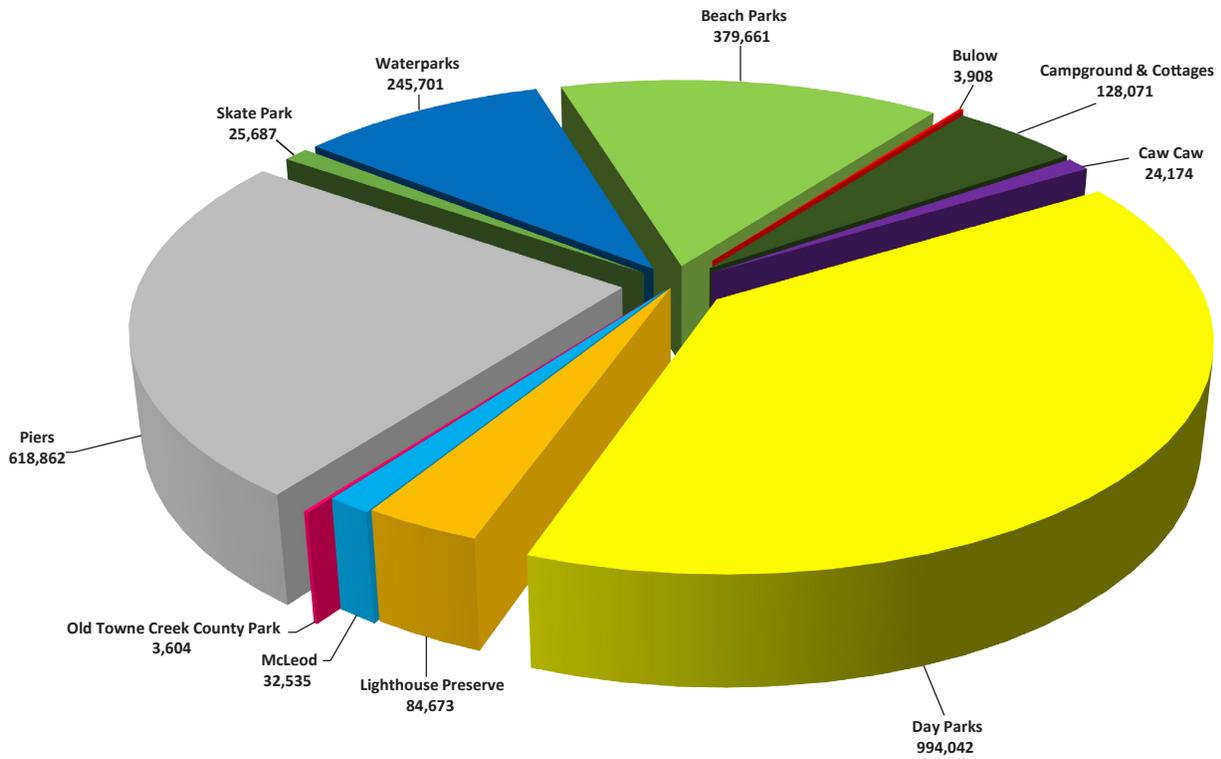
Dale Aren



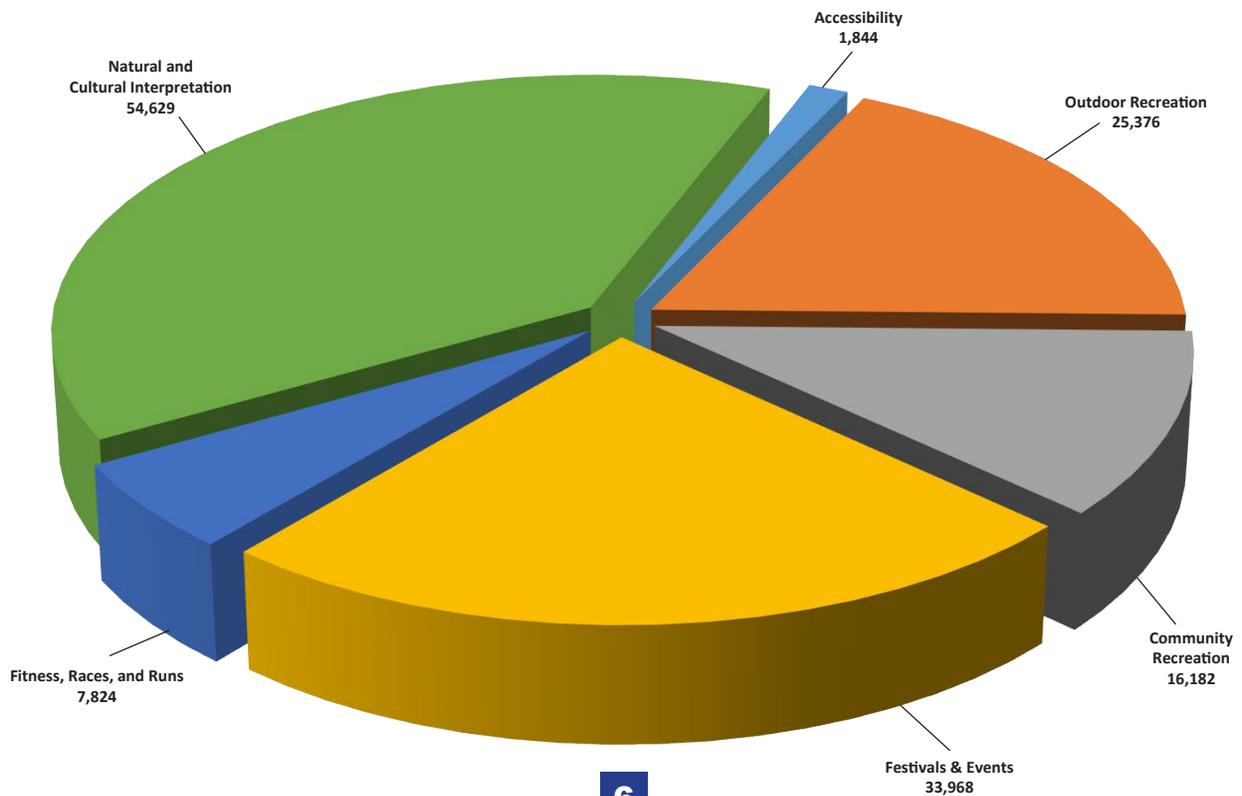
*The Rainforest Attraction at
Splash Zone*

Patrons at Play

FY17-18 Park and Facility Attendance
Total: 2,540,918

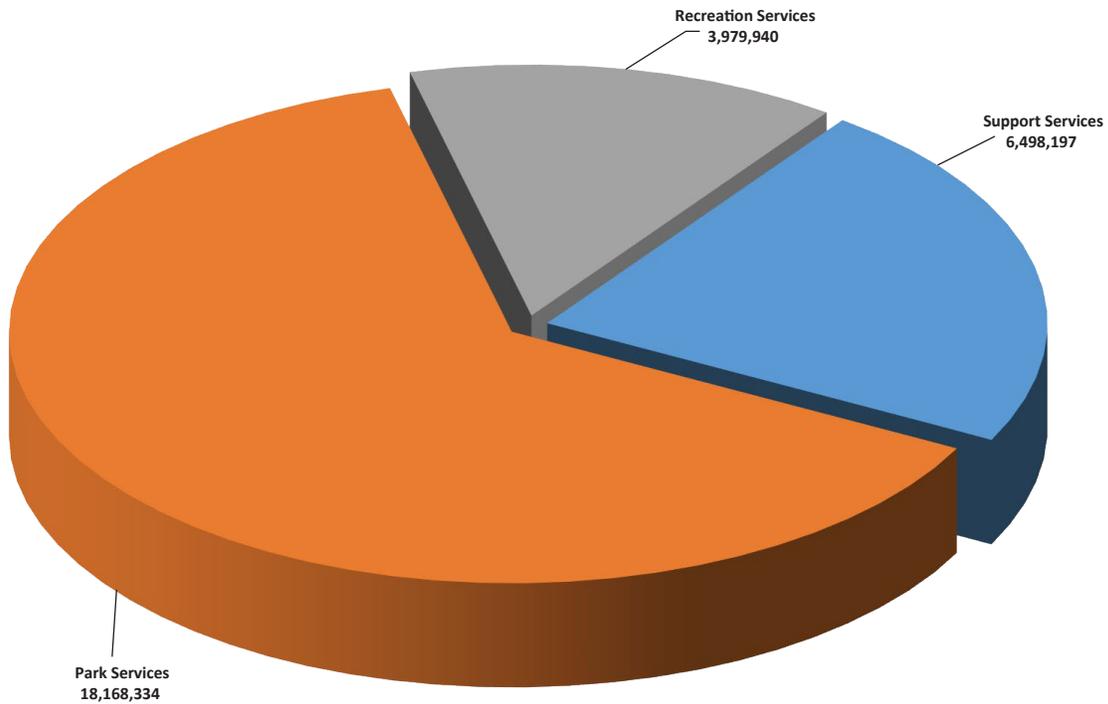


FY17-18 Special Events and Program Attendance
Total: 139,823

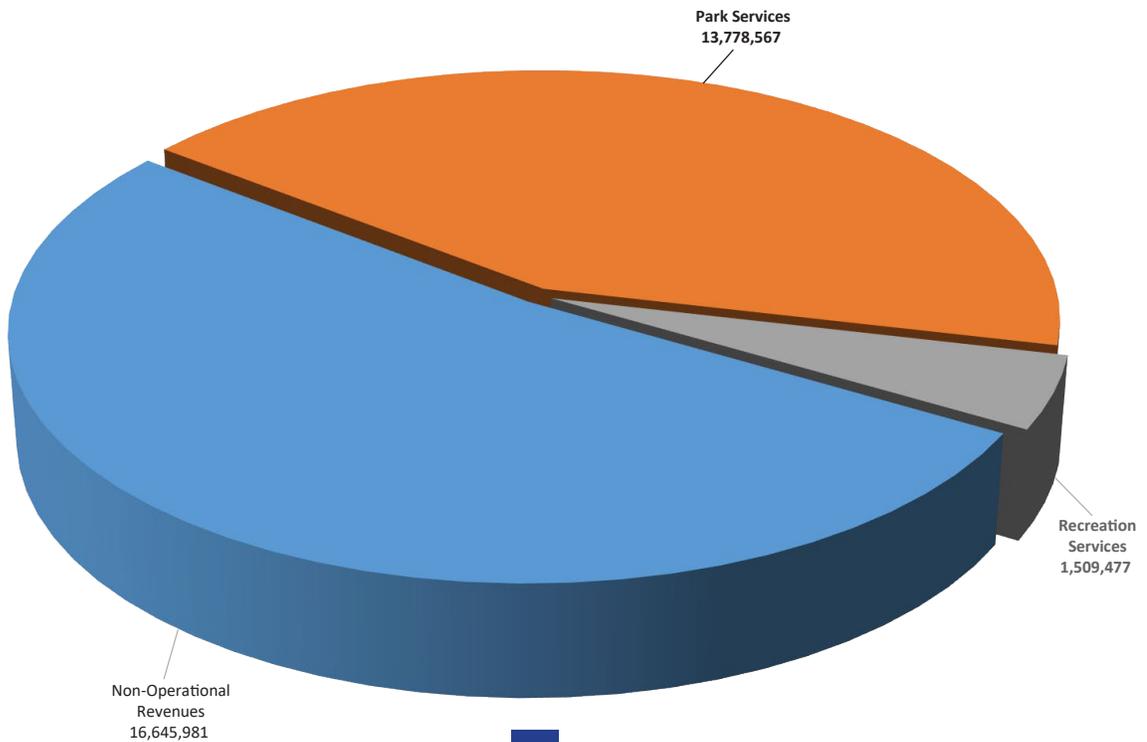


Your Dollars at Work

FY17/18 Total Expenditures
Total: 28,646,471



FY17/18 Total Revenues
Total: 31,934,025





*The Parklands Foundation
Supper with Santa*



Cooper River Marina

Reflecting

Celebrating Our 50th Anniversary

From a modest beginning to a long-lasting legacy, the Charleston County Parks have come a long way. It began as a vision in 1968, and in 2018 we celebrated our 50th anniversary.

In 1968, Charleston County Parks, Recreation and Tourism (PRT) was established and deemed a Special Purpose District. This created the seven-member commission and its powers and duties. Early PRT accomplishments included the opening of five playgrounds on James Island in 1969, Kiawah Beachwalker Park in 1976, Palmetto Islands County Park in 1979 and Folly Beach County Park in 1982. In 1985, the tourism function was transferred to the Charleston Trident Chamber of Commerce and PRT was renamed Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission.

To celebrate our milestone anniversary, Charleston County Parks hosted a variety of special experiences, activities and giveaways in the parks. Several park visitors throughout the year were surprised with a Memory Maker prize pack. The packages included certificates to local businesses, free passes to park events and giveaways featuring our Charleston County Park's special 50th anniversary logo. Park's staff also attended a gala evening to honor their years of service and dedication.

A special thank you to all of our patrons for 50 years of support, we cannot wait to see what the next 50 years brings!

Enhancing

Splash in the Rainforest

A brand new attraction called The Rainforest opened at Splash Zone located in James Island County Park. The Rainforest features a rainforest-themed family play complex complete with buckets dumping water, five slides and various sprays and misting elements. The attraction is perfect for visitors of all ages.

Folly Beach’s “Superman” Pathway

A new pathway that stretches into the sand will allow for wheelchairs and other walking aides to be used on the beach. The project was funded by the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation. Christopher Reeve, an actor well-known for his role as Superman, became an advocate for better treatment and care for people with disabilities after suffering a spinal cord injury.

Johns Island County Park Repairs

The stables at Mullet Hall Equestrian Center received repairs including a new coat of paint and the addition of gutters and underground drain pipes that connect to a retention pond. These improvements solved some standing water issues and will extend the buildings’ lifespans.

Preserving McLeod Plantation Historic Site

Being the stewards of an over 150-year-old historic site entails consistent upkeep. Last year Charleston County Parks stabilized the barn, garage, privy and gin house at McLeod Plantation Historic Site.



New Coke Chair at Folly Pier

Folly Beach Pier visitors have a new photo spot, the big chair is sponsored by Coca-Cola.



Folly Beach County Park
Accessible Pathway



*3-D Archery Course at
Johns Island County Park*

Enhancing (continued)

Bathhouses Beautification

There will be more happy campers at James Island County Park Campground. The bathhouses received a complete renovation. The cosmetic changes included modern tile and fixtures. And, on the more practical side, floor drainage and lighting improvements were made.

Johns Island 3-D Archery Opened

Johns Island County Park added a 3-D Archery Course to complement the existing five-target static range. The 3-D Archery Course features 20 targets of animals that may be found in Lowcountry woods including deer, turkeys, wild pigs, coyotes, black bears and even a Carolina cougar.

Curbing Graffiti

The iconic Folly Beach-area Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve has become a target for graffiti. Charleston County Parks worked to remove the graffiti, while also educating the public on the site's historic significance. In 2018, several unused cement structures that were often targets for graffiti were removed. Charleston County Parks is also investigating long-term cleanup options and surveillance cameras have been installed.

Honoring

SK8 Charleston Engineering Feat

SK8 Charleston, was named Project of the Year by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) South Carolina section. SK8 Charleston skate park opened March 3, 2017. The park was awarded project of the year for 2016-2017 because of the numerous challenges that the designers had to overcome including excessive subgrade settlement, tidal influences on the storm drainage and sensitive environmental concerns.

Schroder Community Center Awarded Grant

Charleston County Parks was awarded a \$40,000 Meet Me at the Park Play Spaces Grant from The Walt Disney Company and National Recreation and Park Association for the Schroder Community Center Outdoor Courts Renovation project in Hollywood. The project repurposed the courts to accommodate more diverse uses including pickleball, tennis and basketball. Charleston County Parks was one of 25 agencies awarded the grant whose purpose is to fund innovative projects that transform parks and improve access to inclusive play spaces.





CALYPSO KITCHEN

Calypso Kitchen Hours
11AM - 5PM

Margaritaville
ORIGINAL
ROCK & ROLL
PARADISE

Honoring (continued)

Supporting Employee Wellbeing

Charleston County Parks was recognized by the South Carolina Hospital Association's Working Well program for meeting best practices in supporting wellbeing at the workplace. The agency was recognized for their efforts to provide employees and their families with access to counseling and programs that support a positive work-life balance and optimal emotional and mental wellbeing. The honor was presented by Working Well, an effort to improve the population's health across the state of South Carolina by establishing cultures of employee wellbeing.

David Bennett Named SCRPA Professional of the Year

The South Carolina Recreation and Park Association (SCRPA) presented their Professional of the Year award to David Bennett. David began his career as a part-time employee at Charleston County Parks 30 years ago, and was soon promoted to full time as recreation program specialist, where he started the popular Lowcountry Cajun Festival. He was named chief operating officer in 2010, and became executive director of the agency in 2017.

Charleston County Parks Hosts Special Park District Forum

Charleston County Parks was honored to host the 2018 Special Park District Forum. Over the years, the forum has been hosted by premier open-space facilities, parks and recreation agencies and forest preserves throughout the United States and Canada. The forum brings together parks and recreation professionals to educate and share best practices

Inspiring

Charleston Embraces the Path of Totality

All eyes were turned toward the sky on August 21, 2017, as Charleston enjoyed being in the path of totality for the first total solar eclipse visible from the contiguous U.S. since 1979. Charleston County Parks offered a variety of programs to view and learn about the total solar eclipse. Prior to the eclipse Caw Caw Interpretive Center hosted an event with a master naturalist to learn what to expect during the eclipse. On the big day, yogis gathered for SunShadow Yoga at the Mt. Pleasant Pier and an Eclipse Extravaganza was held at Caw Caw where participants joined a naturalist to explore how wildlife responded to the eclipse. Charleston County Parks was happy to provide our community with education and spaces with unencumbered views to celebrate this once-in-a-lifetime celestial event.





*Shuckin' on the Cooper at
Mount Pleasant Pier*

Growing

Shuckin' on the Cooper Premiers

Charleston County Parks premiered a new way to celebrate the holiday season. The Mount Pleasant Pier hosted the inaugural Shuckin' on the Cooper, a family-friendly event that offered views of the City of Charleston's holiday parade of boats along with music, drinks and buckets of oysters.

Save the Light Half Marathon

In 2018, Charleston County Parks partnered with Save the Light, Inc. to host their annual half marathon and 5K. The race supports the preservation of the Morris Island Lighthouse by Save the Light, a grassroots, non-profit organization formed to save the lighthouse from being lost to the sea.

Former Baker Hospital Site

Charleston County Parks entered an agreement to lease the agency's former Baker Hospital site to United States Performance Center, who will develop the site as a state-of-the-art sports facility, athletic campus and public amenities center. The master plan will include multi-purpose fields for both public and rental use, walking trails, and viewing locations of the Ashley River. "Charleston County Parks could not afford to develop the property in this way, and rather than leave the property undeveloped for years to come, we believe this partnership will address the need to have a state-of-the-art recreational facility in the Lowcountry," said Charleston County Parks Executive Director David Bennett. The Baker site was donated to Charleston County Parks in 2015 through funding support from Charleston residents Michael and Jenny Messner of The Speedwell Foundation, and their business partner Paul Shiverick and his wife Betsy.

Growing (continued)

Sea Island Cotton Day

McLeod Plantation Historic Site hosted a Sea Island Cotton Day to educate the public on the rare crop that was planted and harvested on the property for the first time in nearly a century. Initially it was feared that the seeds to this fine fiber, unique to the Lowcountry, were gone forever. Yet after some resourceful sleuthing by local farmer Bill McLean, a small number were found at a USDA seed repository in Texas. By bringing Sea Island Cotton back, visitors are now able to have fuller understanding of life at McLeod.

Off-Road Duathlon Debuts

A run-bike-run Off-Road Duathlon debuted at Laurel Hill County Park in Mount Pleasant. The race featured a 2-mile run, followed by a 7-mile bike and finished with another 2-mile run on the park's scenic trails. This beginner-friendly duathlon was presented in partnership with Anne Moore Endurance Coaching and Mt. Pleasant Velo.



*Sea Island Cotton Day at
McLeod Plantation Historic Site*



Skate Forward at
SK8 Charleston

Giving

Swim For It Saves Lives

Charleston County Parks, the Parklands Foundation and the Genesis Project teamed up to create the Swim For It campaign to raise money for drowning prevention. The Genesis Project began in 2014, after the drowning of 13-year-old Genesis Holmes in Hollywood, SC who did not know how to swim. The project aims to eliminate drownings in Charleston County by providing swimming lessons, water safety classes and the construction of pools in rural areas.

Skate Forward

More than 150 youth spent a free day at the SK8 Charleston skate park as part of The Parkland Foundation's Skate Forward initiative. The event was supported by a \$30,000 grant from The Speedwell Foundation. Skate Forward's goal is to develop programs that give access and introduce the sport of skateboarding to low-income communities near the park.

Supper with Santa

Children of all ages enjoyed a magical Supper with Santa for a good cause. On the opening night of the Holiday Festival of Lights families dressed in pajamas enjoyed breakfast for supper and some special one on one time and photographs with Santa. Proceeds from Supper with Santa benefited the Parklands Foundation, which works to remove barriers for members of our community to access our parks, programs and services.

Stono River County Park

The Speedwell Foundation, on behalf of Mike and Jenny Messner, made a \$500,000 gift for the Stono River County Park, located near the Limehouse Bridge. Construction is underway on our newest County Park that will include a marsh front boardwalk, trails, information kiosk, restrooms, bike racks and a bike repair station.



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*Off-Road Duathlon at
Laurel Hill County Park*